

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 NSC-05 L-01 INR-05
PM-03 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 HA-02 PRS-01 EB-04
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R 091030Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9356

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0106

LIMDIS

MANILA FOR ASST. SECRETARY HOLBROOKE

JAKARTA FOR ASST. SECRETARY DERIAN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OCON, PGOV, SHUM, SREF, MASS, SN

SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW

1. PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW CALLED ME IN AT 3:30 P.M.
JANUARY 9 TO ASK ME ABOUT COM CONFERENCE AND CONCLUSIONS
REACHED THEREIN. I HAD WITH ME TEXT OF HOLBROOKE PRESS
CONFERENCE AND WAS ABLE TO SUPPLEMENT THIS BY EMPHASIZING MAJOR
POINTS OF CONTINUED U.S. POLITICAL INTEREST IN REGION AND
MAINTENANCE OF U.S. FORCE STRUCTURE ESSENTIALLY AT PRESENT
LEVELS EXCLUSIVE OF KOREA. I POINTED OUT PHASED NATURE OF
KOREAN WITHDRAWAL AND CUSHIONING OF IMPACT, AND HOPEFUL
NATURE OF PHILIPPINE BASE NEGOTIATIONS. PRIME MINISTER
APPEARED QUITE SATISFIED, COMMENTING ONLY THAT IN HIS OPINION
A WORLD SHOWDOWN WOULD SEE ASIAN-PACIFIC REGION BECOMING
THE REAL CRISIS AREA RATHER THAN EUROPE, WHERE RESIS-
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TANCE LIKELY TO PREVENT IMMEDIATE SOVIET VICTORY.

2. I NOTED THAT DISCUSSION OF U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY
HAD OCCUPIED SIGNIFICANT PART OF COM DISCUSSIONS, AND
SAID IN THIS REGARD THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN
WOULD BE VISITING SINGAPORE LATER THIS WEEK AND I HOPED
APPOINTMENT COULD BE ARRANGED SO THAT HUMAN RIGHTS

ASPECTS OF U.S.-SINGAPORE RELATIONS COULD BE DISCUSSED AT HIGHEST LEVELS. PRIME MINISTER APPEARED AMENABLE (I WILL FOLLOW THIS UP WITH HIS APPOINTMENTS SECRETARY). I EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS REGARDING SINGAPORE FOCUSED PRIMARILY UPON DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL. PRIME MINISTER REMARKED THAT "IF I DIDN'T DO THIS I'D HAVE THEM (THE COMMUNISTS) SWARMING ALL OVER ME," AND HE CALLED ATTENTION TO SITUATION IN 50S AND EARLY 60S. HOWEVER, HE APPEARED QUITE WILLING TO DISCUSS THIS WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN.

3. I FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS DERIAN'S POLICY IN VISITING OTHER COUNTRIES TO TALK WITH THOSE WHOSE PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN RIGHTS WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S, AND THAT I HAD ACCORDINGLY ARRANGED MEETING BETWEEN HER AND J.B. JEYARETNAM. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT JEYARETNAM IS LEADER OF OPPOSITION WORKERS PARTY, AND HAS CIVIL SUIT FILED AGAINST HIM BY PRIME MINISTER FOR ACCUSING HIM, LEE, OF PROFITING PERSONALLY FROM HIS POSITION AS PRIME MINISTER. PRIME MINISTER LEE TOOK THIS INFORMATION CALMLY (IN FACT HE LAUGHED, AND SAID THAT "THE PEOPLE SHE SHOULD REALLY SEE ARE THE ONES WE CAN'T GET OUR HANDS ON.").

4. TO COMPLETE DISCUSSION OF COM CONFERENCE, I TOLD PRIME MINISTER LEE THAT CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION HAD BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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DEVOTED TO SUBJECT OF U.S.-ASEAN RELATIONS, AND REPEATED THOSE POINTS WHICH ERLAND HEGINBOTHAM HAD SAID MIGHT BE DISCUSSED WITH OUR OPPOSITE NUMBERS: INCREASED U.S. ATTENTION TO ADB, FORMULATION OF NEW AID APPROACH TO THE ORGANIZATION, AND ABOVE ALL, WHAT BENEFITS SHOULD ACCRUE TO ASEAN AS OUTCOME OF U.S.-JAPAN TRADE DISCUSSIONS AND FUKUDA'S PROMISE OF ACHIEVING 7 PERCENT LEVEL OF GROWTH. I NOTED AID INTEREST IN TECHNICAL TRAINING PROGRAMS WHICH MIGHT INVOLVE SINGAPORE, AND CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO USING EXISTING STRUCTURES SUCH AS COLOMBO PLAN AND SEAMEO AS BASIS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

5. ON U.S.-SINGAPORE BILATERALS, WE AGREED THERE WERE NO PARTICULAR PROBLEMS. I INFORMED HIM THAT CONSULTATIONS HE HAD WANTED US TO UNDERTAKE WITH CHAIRMAN OF APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES ON P-3 STAGING HAD BEEN COMPLETED, AND THAT I EXPECTED TO BE RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS SHORTLY IN THIS REGARD. I OBSERVED THAT WHILE I-HAWK HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN AT THIS TIME, WE WOULD NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO SINGAPORE'S CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE NEEDS, E.G. SURPLUS UH-1HS AND C-130BS FROM JORDAN.

6. FINALLY, WE TURNED TO SUBJECT OF SINGAPORE REFUGEE TRANSIT FACILITY, IN WHICH PRIME MINISTER LEE EXPLAINED MORE FULLY HIS CONCEPT OF A "BANKABLE GUARANTEE" ON ONWARD TRAVEL. WHAT HE HAS IN MIND IS COUNTRIES RECEIVING REFUGEES ESTABLISHING IN ADVANCE A QUOTA OF PEOPLE THEY ARE WILLING TO RECEIVE SO THAT ONWARD TRAVEL IS ASSURED AND THERE WILL BE NO REPETITION OF SITUATION WHICH DEVELOPED IN DECEMBER 1975 WITH REFUGEES HANGING AROUND WITH NO PLACE TO GO. (THIS, HE SAID, WAS DEMORALIZING BOTH FOR THE REFUGEES AND SINGAPOREANS IN CONTACT WITH THEM AND MUST NOT BE REPEATED.) IN THESE TERMS, ONCE QUOTA WAS EXHAUSTED THE FACILITY WOULD BE CLOSED. I SAID I WOULD PASS THIS INFORMATION ON AND ASSUMED THAT DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN SHORTLY BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT AND THE UNHCR. PRIME MINISTER LEE ALSO RAISED QUESTION OF FINANCES, AND I SAID THAT I BELIEVED THIS WOULD POSE NO PROBLEM.
HOLDRIDGE

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